



GLORY TO THE GREAT PHYSICIAN

Whenever I think of the word Testimony, I think of a sermon I once heard from Joyce Meyers which broke down that word. You can't have a testimony without first having a test and you may have the moanies. This sermon came at the right time in my life. I have a lot of testimonies. They are filled with physical and psychological pain which had me moaning. I would like to share a few of the outstanding testimonies that demonstrates God as THE GREAT Physician.

The first great miracle he performed was when I was 8 years old. Three days before my 8th birthday, I was watching my brother play video games on the Sega Genesis. I sat for hours watching him play, as he was a phenomenal player. As he finished, he looked over at me and asked, "Marie, did you hit your head?" I told him no. He got up quickly and screamed, "Mom, look at Marie's face! I swear I didn't do it!" I learned the right side of my face just spontaneously swelled up suddenly and looked bruised like I had been beaten up. We went to the local ER, but they couldn't help. They recommended me to see my pediatrician. We went through several wrong diagnoses before I was sent to Texas Children's Hospital ER. There they felt I had a calcified upper tooth on the right side that needed to be pulled. This was a permanent tooth. When they went to pull it, I hemorrhaged. After this we learned the correct diagnosis, Arteriovenous Malformation (AVM) with an aneurysm. Arteriovenous Malformation is where the arteries and veins clump together like a bowl full of spaghetti and an aneurysm is where the walls of the arteries weaken and balloon out. We learned the tooth root was embedded into the AVM and hit the aneurysm. The aneurysm was at 5 cm and still growing. It was now bleeding internally. Doctors were telling my parents that I wasn't going to make it to my 9th birthday. It was an extremely rough battle!

A hole was left in my mouth from where the tooth once sat. Doctors tried to close it on multiple occasions, but it wouldn't stay closed. I suffered from nose and mouth bleeds. Doctors tried to embolize (surgical procedure where they go in the artery and place medical glue to block the bleeding areas). Unfortunately, I hemorrhaged the first medical glue out through the hole from the tooth and the second one I had an allergic reaction, but it stayed in place. I had to have a central line to combat the reaction, and we were able to get it to hold up. The more surgeries we did the more pain and nerve damage was done. This was a battle that took over 6 years. I struggled with the pain and even begged my parents to please just stop the treatments by the age of 10. My parents and sister wouldn't give up.



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They stayed with me each step of the way and encouraged me. At the age of 11, I went to have the hole in my mouth surgically closed again with removing all my other baby teeth (9 in total) at once under anesthesia. The doctor came out surprised... he removed the 9 teeth no problem, but he discovered that I have a new tooth coming in where the hole was. This is a miracle tooth! The physicians couldn't close the hole, but God did. He made me whole again with a new permanent tooth.

I later began watching church on Sunday mornings on TV and became saved at the age of 13. I started attending church even if it caused headaches or migraines. I had a new perspective. Jesus died a horrible death on the cross. A migraine is nothing compared to what Jesus went through. I was determined now that the devil will not steal my healing or victory. Started to live by Psalms 118:17 which states, "I will live and not die and proclaim what the Lord has done." Soon the migraines stopped, and I didn't need any medication. At my 14-year-old scans/follow up, doctors were amazed as they had never seen AVMs break up, disappear and so did the aneurysm. A miracle!

I stayed healthy for many years (over a decade) and started to live a normal life. Was able to become a Registered Nurse. However, my health came under attack again in 2016. When turning a patient, I suffered a neck injury that radiated down my right arm. When I turned my neck, I would have mini strokes. Turned out the vertebrae had shifted and would compress the vertebral artery whenever I looked up or turned my head. I struggled to find a doctor that would take my case as they have to cut the bone off the vertebral artery, and this is very risky. After four doctors declined my case, I prayed God to direct me to the right physician. Someone from church gave me the name of a doctor in the medical center and he took my case. I had the surgery- fusion of the C4-C5 vertebra with vertebral artery decompression and made a full recovery. I had no residual weakness on my right side from the strokes. Praise God – another miracle!

My health came under massive attack again for a third time in February 2022. I started experiencing suddenly massive crushing chest pain. It radiated down my left arm and back. I could barely breathe. My Fitbit was alerting me that my heart rate was racing in the 130+. My brother rushed me to the ER. We learned I wasn't having a heart attack but learned I have an ascending aortic aneurysm.



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The aorta had ballooned right where the aorta and heart connect. It was 3.9 cm but was not bleeding internally. I was discharged and followed up with several different cardiac specialists. I later learned the chest pain, that lasted for about a year, was actually pericarditis. We also learned the ascending aortic aneurysm was genetic. I have several family members with aortic aneurysms. Unfortunately, they have all passed. I am so thankful for all the prayer warriors at River Bend as I could feel the prayers. At the year mark, I had to have another echocardiogram. The chest pain had stopped about a month prior. In the echo, the aortic aneurysm measured 3.4 cm. As I sat with the physician, he was perplexed and had to look at my initial one that had measured 3.9 cm. He had never heard of an aneurysm shrinking 0.5 cm, especially in a year without any surgical intervention. He shrugged his shoulders and said, "It must be God." I still am monitored annually due to genetics, but it still has not grown much more. Another proof that God is the Great Physician!

The 4th massive attack on my health came in December 2023. I had just started my shift at work and itched outside of my nostril. Suddenly, I started hemorrhaging. I went to the ER on campus, and we were able to get the bleeding to stop. They didn't know how to help me and discharged me. They instructed me to find a specialist. I struggled to find a specialist as all my childhood ones had retired – it had been almost 30 years since I first started the initial journey. I had a feeling that the facial AVMs and aneurysms were back and I was right. My face swelled up suddenly again but not as severe as when I was 8 years old. I knew my time was ticking - appointments were months down the road with the specialists. I kept calling each day for cancellations and finally had success. My care was finally rushed along in January. On January 15, 2024, I had an angiogram scheduled to see how bad everything was. It was bad! The artery and vein in my right nare had fused together making an Arterio Venous (AV) fistula, I had 5 new AVM clusters with aneurysms, and he was unable to safely maneuver through the blood vessels. My vision in my right eye was being impacted as I had an AVM cluster going to my right eye but not in the eye. In the Recovery area, I woke up hemorrhaging. I was admitted to ICU, and a team of surgeons joined my case. On January 17, 2024, I was taken for a procedure where I was embolized in 2 of the areas and had an aneurysm coil placed going to the AV fistula. I spent about 5 days in ICU and nearly a week in total in the hospital. The doctor did what he could but planned to go back in 6 weeks due to swelling to see what more he could do.



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In March, he went in but determined there was nothing more that he specifically could do for me. He sent me a microvascular plastic surgeon and ENT to discuss surgically removing these. I was having nose bleeds if I chewed, drank from a straw, bent down, or lifted anything heavy. I was on a liquid/soft diet for almost a year. I had another 3 surgeries where they removed the life-threatening ones in segments (6 surgeries in total in less than a year). The last surgery was on December 16, 2024. This one removed the major AVM, AV fistula, aneurysm coil, 1 embolization, and 5 marble size aneurysms. God had everything right there for him as he cut. He thought he was going to have to do extensive surgery with talks about possibly removing the right side of my nose. Fortunately, I was able to keep my nose, and I can now eat and chew without bleeding. Praise God!

My hope is that if you are going through health struggles that you remember that God is the GREAT Physician! My doctors were wrong about my prognosis. Listen to God's prognosis. It doesn't mean you won't struggle with pain. Believe me the pain was intense, but I wouldn't let the devil steal God's victory. I continued to declare each day Psalm 118:17. Praise God in the good times and bad. Hopefully, by His stripes you will be healed too.